

Jack Sargeant AS/MS  
Y Gweinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol  
Minister for Social Partnership



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair Culture, Communication, Welsh Language,  
Sport and International Relations Committee

5 August 2024

Dear Delyth,

Thank you for your letter of 27 June regarding the cuts to Books Council of Wales's funding, in which you request further information on the Creative Skills Fund and about my recent visit to the Books Council.

The Creative Skills Fund was set up in 2022 to help address the skills needs of the creative sectors directly supported by Creative Wales. The aim of the Fund is to deliver against the priorities set out in the Creative Skills Action Plan, which was shaped by an industry led Advisory Panel following research into the needs of the sectors. The Plan identifies three priority sectors of support, namely music, screen and games, animation and immersive technology. When the second round of the Fund launched earlier this year, it was again designed to align to the priorities and focus of the Creative Skills Action Plan.

The Creative Skills Action Plan is a three year action plan, ending in 2025. An evaluation of delivery against the Plan's priorities and the projects funded through the Fund will be undertaken prior to decisions being made on any future approach to support for creative skills. This will include consideration of whether any future funding delivered through Creative Wales should cover wider creative sectors.

The previous Minister for Social Partnership Sarah Murphy MS met with the Books Council in Aberystwyth on 6 June to visit their Distribution Centre and to meet with Helgard Krause, Chief Executive and Linda Tomos, Chair, Books Council of Wales. The meeting was arranged as a six-monthly ministerial meeting, forming part of the governance arrangements surrounding Creative Wales' annual grant funding to the Books Council.

During the meeting they discussed the impact of the budget cut and the challenging budgetary situation for 2024-25. The Books Council acknowledged difficult decisions had been taken on how best to absorb the cut, in close consultation with publishers and subcommittees. They confirmed priority has been given to protecting budgets that support revenue programmes and supported posts. This has ensured the grants awarded to publishers from the Books Council's core budgets are unchanged from the previous year. No redundancies have been

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

made, however, a small number of vacant posts will not be filled. Budgets related to wider areas, such as marketing, have been reduced and in some cases, such as the modest grant for independent high street booksellers supporting Welsh language books, have been cut.

I gather that during the meeting, it was discussed that we should explore all opportunities to seek additional funding in-year to support targeted projects or activities, if budgets are made available. The Books Council also highlighted the positive impact to the sector of leveraging wider funding from other Welsh Government departments. As noted in the previous correspondence, the activities delivered through these additional grant awards enable us to further invest in the sector while also supporting a broader range of Welsh Government priorities including promotion of the Welsh language and educational attainment.

I am grateful for their continued work both to support the Welsh publishing industry and to deliver its reading for pleasure interventions during this difficult period. If you would like any further information on Creative Wales' support for the publishing sector through the Books Council of Wales I would be happy for my officials to provide a briefing to the Committee.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JACK SARGEANT". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'. A horizontal line is drawn underneath the signature, extending from the start of the 'J' to the end of the word 'SARGEANT'.

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